1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5)1938 Pukapukans

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When several paternal lineages had been holding a period of seclusion at the same time, the boys' parade took them to the god house of one of the lineages, where a *haitau lukipoko* contest was held. Each boy of the home lineage knelt with his back to a post of the god house and performed the *lupe* ritual (p. 322), beating his thighs with his hands. When the people of the other lineages heard the boys at their ritual, they sent their own *haitau* boys to the same god house. On arriving, each boy of the second group crouched down in the customary half-bent position, beating his knees and thighs, and, making the sound "br-r-r" with his lips, advanced to one of the kneeling boys. The two locked shoulders. The challenger tried to push the kneeling boy away from the post, while his opponent tried to push him over and still retain his position by the post. The boy pushed away lost the contest and retired. The winner of a contest might go to the help of another boy of his lineage still engaged. He helped his friend, grasping him round the waist from behind and pushing with all his strength so that their combined weight might overcome the opponent. Insofar as the opponent might also be supported, strenuous contests resulted. The *haitau* group that vanquished the most boys of the opposing group won the contest for their lineage. The defeated lineage had to wait till a later *haitau lukipoko* to avenge its disgrace. The struggle over, the boys returned to normal group life.

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Informants were vague as to the significance of the *haitau lukipoko*. It is likely that values besides the mere sporting ones have a place in its symbolism. The significance of its association with the god house where the priests were accustomed to worship the gods, and the employment of the *lupe* technique customarily reserved for putting the priest *en rapport* with his god, is obscure, and I have no cultural rationalization to offer other than my own speculation that the contest was originally a feature of religious initiation following on the initiation into manhood, which has been lost to the present generation of Pukapukans.

Young Men's and Young Women's Houses

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In everyday activities there is little difference between the life of the youth and that of the young adult. Young men and women are expected to engage more seriously in work, the boys fishing, the girls helping consistently with household duties. In the realm of sex they are now considered mature enough to lead sexual lives. For this and other purposes they might formerly leave the family house and live in *wale lopa* or *wale tamawine* (young men's or young women's houses) with companions of their own age and sex. It does not appear that these houses had the institutional character associated with the bachelor houses of Melanesian communities. There was nothing obligatory about membership in them. The way in which a young men's house might be formed was explained by informants as follows:

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A boy or girl might invite one or more friends to come and live with him at his parents' house. Some parents might not object, as living in the house implied obligations to assist in providing food and brought extra food shares to the household. On the other hand, a parent might object to having several young men (*lopa*) or women (*tamawine*) around his house, especially if they were lazy, and would tell his son or daughter to go build a house elsewhere, where he or she could live with friends without annoying anyone. The house was built on any convenient site—on land owned by the

1:Beaglehole and Beaglehole E-5 (1934-5) 1938 Pukapukans

child, the parent, or one of the friends. The young men or women used their house as a lounging and sleeping house while continuing to eat their meals with their parents, to assist them in the general tasks of food getting. A parent who did not want his child to leave home would tell his child's friends to betake themselves elsewhere.

For the most part, young men and women stayed at home, lived with their parents, and assisted with the tasks of the family. A child who stayed at home was a *tama pili matua* (child close to parent). A favorite child (*tama wakaemaema, tama yele,* or *mayui*) was never permitted to live in a young men's house, especially if the parents, wishing to make a good marriage for the child, had gone to the trouble of graduating it from the house of seclusion. On the other hand, wayward children were not hindered if they wished to live with their friends. Residence in a young men's or young women's house was continued until marriage or until vagaries of personal choice sent the young person back to live with relatives. The present resident agent in the interests of morality does not allow unmarried young people to reside in young men's or women's houses, and this type of living arrangement has been officially discarded.

CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

Once a Pukapukan boy or girl has attained adult status, he or she is at liberty to have sexual experience irrespective of marriage, which indeed usually comes much later in the life of the adult and only when he is ready to assume the specific economic responsibilities that marriage entails. It is a matter of no importance that a girl or a bride should be a virgin. There is no word in the language to characterize such a physiological state. Rather has a woman who has borne a child out of wedlock by this act proved herself able to bear her husband heirs to carry on his paternal descent line. A girl for whom parents wished a particularly good marriage found a certain but minor emphasis on the importance of preserving virginity, but this was more a matter of preventing her from attaining a reputation for being promiscuous than a matter of interest in her virginity. That the sacred maid (*mayakitanga*) of the chief was barred from sexual intercourse of any nature throughout her life was perhaps due to the religious functions she had to perform and was, at any rate, exceptional.

For the ordinary girl there is nothing in Pukapuka approaching the institutionalized rupturing of the hymen by an elder which occurs elsewhere in Polynesia, nor is there any institutionalized instruction of the adolescent in sex matters. Knowledge was obtained by the boy or girl through personal experimentation with members of the opposite sex. Informants remarked that a virgin who wishes to save her lover the trouble will digitally rupture her own hymen before going to him. But this is a matter of individual choice.